



San Antonio

Research Enhancement Award Program

Director: Michael L. Parchman, MD, BA,

Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2008

The Veterans Evidence-based Research, Dissemination, and Implementation Center (VERDICT) is based at the Audie L. Murphy Division of the South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) in VISN 17. Its primary academic affiliate is the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA). The VERDICT's mission is to improve the health of veterans by researching methods of improving the performance of the clinical microsystems that surround and support the health care system-patient interface. Specific areas of research include: 1) organizational effectiveness and change in health care settings, relational coordination and communication among health care teams (especially those in primary care and in in-patient settings); 2) chronic care management, coordination of care, peri-operative risk management, and genomic health services for complex patients; 3) quality of care improvement and outcomes for patients with diabetes, obesity, pneumonia, epilepsy, serious mental illness, PTSD; and 4) post-deployment health.

Current Year Challenges & Highlights: After 10 years of leadership as VERDICT's PI, Dr. Jacqueline Pugh resigned in March of 2008. Michael Parchman, MD, MPH is serving as Acting PI until a permanent replacement can be found. The VERDICT's Steering Committee and Dr. Eisen have been extremely proactive and helpful in providing feedback and input to VERDICT leadership and local stakeholders regarding PI recruitment. VERDICT's academic affiliate, UTHSCSA, has agreed to a joint recruitment process with the intention that the new VERDICT PI will also serve as Director of a to-be-created University Center for Health Services Research. A search committee with key stakeholders from the local VA facility and academic affiliate has been formed, advertisements have been placed, and targeted letters have been sent to a number of desirable candidates. By the end of FY2008, one application had been received. In spite of this challenge, VERDICT investigators made significant progress in a number of areas in FY2008, including increasing our number of HSR&D-funded projects and increasing our total funding.

Future Plans: A major goal for VERDICT in FY2009 will be the successful recruitment of a permanent PI. As part of continuing work on their current 5-year strategic plan, VERDICT investigators will build upon recent success in developing investigator capacity and continue to enlarge its portfolio of HSR&D-funded work. Six HSR&D "merit" projects/career development awards active or initiated in FY2008 will continue into FY2009 and Dr. Parchman's new IIR will begin in early FY2009. At least 3 VERDICT investigators are planning to submit for November/December reviews. Two of these proposals take advantage of new opportunities and initiatives important to VA HSR&D and veterans. The first is Dr. Arar's HSR&D Center Supplemental Pilot Program Award for Building Health Services Genomics Research capacity (DNA 08-129). Because of the successful completion of this initial work, Dr. Arar will be submitting an IIR for the December 2008 review. In addition, Dr. MJ Pugh's concept paper for HSR&D's recent solicitation on TBI Screening Instruments and Processes for Clinical Follow-up was approved for submission of a full proposal. This proposal will build on other recent work, poised VERDICT to become a leader in post-deployment health. Recent operational mergers within DoD locally have resulted in the formation of the world's largest military medical center: the San Antonio Military Medical Center (formed from Brooke Army Medical Center and USAF Wilford Hall Medical Center) and the United States Army Institute of Surgical Research, which respectively serve as one of the major trauma centers and the only burn center for all military personnel worldwide. VERDICT's recent and ongoing work with DoD collaborators have already resulted in 3 funded merit & short-term projects (detailed below), and capitalizes on these recent developments in San Antonio. The Department of Veteran Affairs has selected San Antonio as the site of a \$67 million polytrauma center that will be built on the campus of the Audie L. Murphy Division of the South Texas Veterans Health Care System, and thus co-located with the VERDICT. In addition, UTHSCSA and VERDICT investigators were recently awarded a \$25 million grant from the

Department of Defense (DoD) to lead a research consortium "STRONG STAR." VERDICT investigators are playing a key role in this consortium to study post-traumatic stress disorder among veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Another consortium led by UTHSCSA recently received a \$26 million NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award in FY2008 to speed translation of biomedical breakthroughs. VERDICT investigators played a key role in the development and writing of the "T2" or bedside to community key function area within this proposal and will play a key role in the CTSA's "T2" translation efforts to identify effective methods of disseminating and implementing the latest research findings into clinical practice and the community. Finally, a new state-funded Center for Patient Safety will be housed at the Audie L. Murphy VAMC. Its goals are highly complementary with those of the VERDICT; collaborations are foreseen with several VERDICT investigators.